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THE  
**Heavenly Dykes**

Poems by

JUNE E. DOWNEY





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THE  
HEAVENLY DYKES

By  
JUNE E. DOWNEY



BOSTON: RICHARD G. BADGER

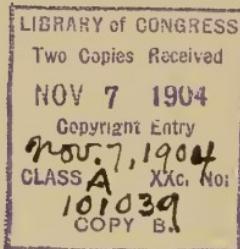
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1904

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PRINTED AT  
THE GORHAM PRESS  
BOSTON, U. S. A.

TO THE MEMORY OF MY FATHER



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## THE HEAVENLY DYKES

Brushed by the wings and the winds of the  
heavenly ocean;

Banking the billows of song, the azure floods  
of the air;

Where sun-tides, ebbing with lingering motion,  
Wash thitherward pink-lidded cloud-shells;—  
there

Rise the Heavenly Dykes, the skyey dykes,  
The tree-dykes, leafy and fair.

Oh, brown-grey tree-trunks laid deep in the turf  
Of the low-lying, motherly Island of Earth!

Above and above, I can hear,— I can see

Leaf upon leaf, uncurling, flung free  
At the fathomless port of a fathomless sea.

Spirit of Spring, whose swift fingers flashing in  
gladness

Builded the tree-dykes, thy secret is told:  
Fears lest the earth-heart be smitten with mad-  
ness

For the flash of the sun-surf, the flood-tides of  
gold.

Yet see! Sweet Spirit, the little pale buds  
Are shyly clinging the brown branches to;  
See! The delicate chinks of the skyey dykes  
Are letting the blue, blue sky-waters through.

Wall deeper the sky-sea ;  
Heap higher the barrier ;  
Mass tassels of russet, of amber, of grey !  
See the long, drooping, fleecy plumes thwart  
the green carrier,  
See the rose-cones splashed by the misty spray !  
Wonderful drifts of apple-bloom snow  
Where the blue wave breaks ;  
Exquisite pink-sweet masses of peach-blow,  
Edging the cloud-flakes !

Beautiful dykes of the heavenly ocean,  
Banks where the glad birds sing,  
I would I might outpour with them my devotion,  
My hymn to the Spring.

## SHADOWS

### I

The hyacinthine shadows float at eve  
Out from the rainbow caverns of the west ;  
They fall atremble on the mountain breast,  
And in their swooning lovely pallors leave.  
The nightly shadows in cool darkness heave  
Upon pine cones heaped 'neath the forest-crest ;  
Or, paling at the chilly moon's behest,  
On alabaster their white imprints weave.  
There are, too, shadows of the early hour,  
When morn comes forth her dewy bath again ;  
And these are veils to hide her radiancy.  
Oh, would that poesy come to perfect flower !  
For e'en the faery joy of shadows pain,  
While thus their winged beauty fleeth me.

### II

Strange shadows float, too, in the spirit-world ;  
Quaint, unsubstantial as a woe foretold ;  
And some are arabesque of mauve and gold ;  
And some blue gossamer sky-wings have un-  
furled ;  
Some are as faint as gauze leaves newly whorled  
Around the stamen when the buds unfold ;  
And some are ebon black and bitter cold,  
Whose heavy chill upon the soul lies curled.  
Faint dreams, dim hopes, that vanish in the sun ;  
Broad darkness fallen on some mount or  
stream ;  
Gray fancies by some open tomb revealed ; —  
They haunt me so, these shadows, I am won  
To dip my pen into their misty beam,  
And trace a shadow's shade by lines con-  
cealed.

## FIRST SORROW

As poignant as first Love. Pilot o'er seas  
Tumultuous, uncharted as Love's own ;  
Where we embark nor know the distant port  
Whither our Pilot steers us; know alone  
That Love's free needle points unto the Dawn,  
And Sorrow's sails are set for twilight realms  
Of the far West. Most dim is Sorrow's sea ;  
Grey with the mist of tears and visited  
By sobbing sea-winds, broken-wingèd birds ;  
Haunted by grieving phantoms unpeased,  
Who, in the long sad watches of the night,  
Set ringing melancholy changes on  
Unquiet bells, wild bells, innumerable.

From that untold far voyage we return  
Never the same. Our eyes forevermore  
Are filled with twilight; evermore we hear  
The moan of waters, clang of mournful bells.  
E'en as Love's voyagers but newly come  
From sailing the auroral seas, awhile  
We walk apart with slow uncertain step ;  
Earth-strangers, alien to her ways, who know  
No word of her uncouth, unloving speech ;  
Reluctant to renew old energies.

Yea, there are times in the long after-years  
When we would flee the crowded streets, the  
press  
Unfriendly of indifferent multitudes ;  
We fain would step aboard the shadowy ship ;  
Fain see again the far mysterious grey  
Of heaving billows ; fain would share again  
The perfect quiet of a ghost forlorn.  
But not again may we embark ; but once  
The pale-faced Pilot bids us sail with him ;  
But once, and not again, — his strong decree  
Who is inexorable as Love, the stern.

## IN RETREAT

Dear dumb brute things, I love you so,  
Because I, too, am dumb ; I gaze  
Sad eye to eye, nor find amaze,  
Nor startled shudder at my woe ;  
And if I brush you rudely with my skirt,  
From sunward turning for the blinding blaze,  
    You are not hurt.

Oh, perfect sympathy that broods  
O'er sorrow, till akin it glides  
Through secret of its broken moods !  
O Nature's children of pathetic eyes,  
    How wise  
The lowly wisdom of the loving eyes !

I love you, great strong ancient trees !  
I cannot pray, but watch instead  
Those skyward tensions overhead,  
Which more avail than bended knees.  
I lean my head on some gray trunk with moan  
To feel the cool leaves that its bounties shed.  
    I am alone.

Oh, comfort of the green embrace,  
And leaf-kiss for the starvèd soul ;  
Great tenderness and saintly grace !  
Ye priests of Nature of no slavish stole,  
    Nor dole  
Of human harshness ; thine the heavenly stole !

I love you, timid birds that flee,  
Bronze flashes through the sentinel grass ;  
And you, transparent flowers, that pass  
The liquid sunlights on to me.

I love thee, Nature ; aye, it doth avail  
To love the whole of thee. No fears harass  
                        Of scourging flail.  
Soft comforts for thine erring child ;  
Swift pardons for her stumbling feet,  
For she was by the world beguiled !  
But fain would hasten now to thy retreat ;  
                        Oh, sweet  
The loving silence of that dear retreat !

## ANGEL OF MUSIC

### I

Thou Angel of Music, with wistful eye,  
Passionate-hearted and silver-veined ;  
Thou Stranger-Angel, reluctant and shy,  
Hardly won by the mortal cry ;  
Whose skyey pinions are white, are frail ;  
Whose arched foot shines on a planet's trail ;  
One spirit-hand in God's at rest,  
One athrob on man's hot breast !  
Angel of Music, we sink to thee,  
Thou hast spelled us, spelled us eternally.  
Thy notes fly earthward as flakes of fire  
That drop from the storm-rent clouds of  
desire ;  
White as the flash of thy hand, I ween ;  
Crimson and gold and purple and green ;  
Heavenly dews that laugh with dawn ;  
Silver of stars that are faint and wan ;  
Mingling of spirit with flame and air,  
Winged with joy and with joy's despair.

## II

Hush! She hath builded an organ, her own;  
It riseth from chaos, the infinite deep;  
Through vasty chambers, through aisles un-  
known,  
The warring winds of the universe creep,  
Passionate, fitful, with multitone moan.  
Oh, the pipes are the wonderful caverns of space,  
And the stops are the suns, and the keys are  
stars;  
Under a globe of crystal it towers,  
Golden and ivory, bolts and bars.

## III

And the world was sad in its bitter age,  
Its wisdom had made it chill and gray;  
It shivered through desolate hearts and  
homes;  
Despair was its lord and faith at bay.  
A moan and a sob and a helpless cry,  
A pallid prayer and a futile breath,—  
The journey was made from the infant fear,  
Through fruitless age to welcome death.  
Angel, thou knewest the great dim thing,  
Thou heldest the secret of its strange deep;  
Brood o'er us all; from thy bright wing  
Let the shadow of splendor wave and  
creep.  
Lost in the light of thine eyes, we forget  
Sorrow, ambition, love, regret;  
The prison opens, the pathway clears;  
We feel the pulse of thy hope divine,  
We have grown wise in that faith of  
thine;  
While sleep comes down and calm-eyed peace,  
And our hearts lie still in woe's surcease.

## THE HOMING DOVE

Athwart the deep blue of the skies ; above  
Low-lying massy clouds ; in pulsing flight  
Where shafted sunbeams sleep on wings of  
white,  
Speeds the bright wonder of the Homing Dove.  
    Oh, dear delight,

The deep engulfing in the billowing skies !  
The glad surrender to its Being's hest,  
In flight to welcoming eyes and loving breast,  
Whereon it stills its fluttering and lies  
    In perfect rest !

Thine, too, the rapture of the Homing Dove,  
When through the azure of long sunlit days,  
In flight that some divine behest obeys,  
Thou seekest, Heart, the haven of her love,  
    In glad amaze.

## TO JOY

Of old, I saw thee in thy starry robes  
Athwart the pageant purple of the east.  
Thine eyes were full of laughter ;  
    I saw the wafture  
    Of thy breezy hand  
    Against dawn's fire,  
Dawn's golden-stringèd crimson-fronted lyre ;  
Within the faltering dusk thy white foot gleamed  
    Tip-toe upon the bosom of a cloud.  
    My spirit bowed.  
I prayed to thee, Thou Joy.

Of late, I saw thee in white veils of flame  
Pass slowly through a wild of new-made graves ;  
Thine eyes were wide with wonder.

“ Yonder ! ”

Thy beckoning spirit-hand was loving, longing ;  
A night was dawning  
To stars serene.

“ My graves, my graves, Great Joy ! ”  
Beneath wide arches  
Marches

The silent soldiery of hopes undaunted ;  
With faiths unwonted,  
Faiths more proud,  
My spirit leaned toward thee ;  
My sad soul bowed ;  
I prayed to thee, Thou Joy.

### THE DIVER

If Thou wilt, send me there, O Lord,  
To the deeps where the slime and the ooze  
Run riot o'er dead men, long dead ; —  
(Poor discolored flesh ! Poor bruised beaten  
bones !)

Where the deep-sea monsters gape long  
And are fain to devour me ; and I, —  
Foregoing the dear human joy,  
The one sweet moment of land  
That beaches the infinite bounds  
Of two oceans, — and I, alone,  
(O God, do you hear ? Alone ?)  
For my breath and my reason gasp long,  
And stumble half-blind, all-mad ; —  
Yea, Lord, if Thou wilt, send me there,  
I shall thank Thee, O Lord, if I find  
And bring back one pearl-seed for men.

## APPLE-BLOOM

Oh, the apple-tree bends with its weight of bloom  
Down, down to the meadows of May;  
While the warm wind, heaving the boughs aside,  
Tosses the petals far and wide,  
Ensnowing the fragrant day.

From the topmost branch through the red and white  
Flits a robin with crimson breast;  
Or he tilts on a perfumed flowery bough,  
And chirps and chirps as he best knows how,  
For joy of the mate and the nest.

Lo! under the billowy odorous bloom,  
Where the rosy snow-drift lies,  
My Love is singing in May-tide grace,  
The apple-bloom on her upturned face,  
The love-light in her eyes.

Would ever as thus, we two, alone,  
'Neath the smile of the blue, blue sky;  
Our nest built deep in the tree's white sway;  
A song at our lips, by night, by day;—  
And the robin flitting by.

## ARIZONA

Where the southland heaves its crest  
    To the west,  
And the warm sun glowing through  
    Depths of blue  
Sparkles in the radiant air ;  
    Southward there,  
Sunning all its tawny length,  
    Lazy strength,  
Lies the desert's vast extent,  
    Opulent ;  
Gorgeous in its cactus-crown,  
    Red and brown ;  
Of its mesquite and mescal,  
    Prodigal ;  
And its yucca's lily-flight,  
    Slim and white.  
Oh, those restless sculptors twain,  
    Wind and rain,  
Built it castles, grim and old,  
    Flecked with gold ;  
Haunted mesas, where the hosts  
    Of dim ghosts  
Troop in fluttering regret,  
    Hoping yet  
Down the steep to find a way.  
    Oh, the day !  
Quaking earth and bitter wail !  
    “ Lost the trail ! ”

Here cliff-palaces, in years  
    Dark with fears,  
Did the Moqui build, complete,  
    A retreat.  
Here the Gila monster hides ;  
    Here there glides  
O'er the wastes the sly coyote.  
    Else sounds float

Where the sudden clear creeks spring,  
    Laugh and sing  
Through the flowering willows dank  
    On their bank.  
There are pinyon forests here ;  
    All the year  
Falling nuts splash softly down,  
    Small and brown.  
Forests, too, of agate stocks,  
    Jeweled rocks ;  
Sands where smouldering garnets beam,  
    Turquoise gleam.

Yonder, by the granite pent,  
    Turbulent,  
Colorado's waters beat  
    Gleaming feet  
Of its canyon's mighty swells.  
    Citadels,  
Turrets, temples, ruins vast,  
    Lie at last,  
White and yellow, red and dun  
    In the sun,  
Where the giant cliffs uprise  
    To the skies ;  
While within its trackless void,  
    Wind-decoyed,  
Mighty storm-clouds, grim and hoar,  
    Are at war.  
Still the shadowy violet haze,  
    Through long days,  
Height and depth and breadth thereof  
    Broods above.

In the chasm's deep retreat,  
At its feet,  
Where through flowering almond trees  
The soft breeze  
Fans the changeless tropic day,  
Kneading clay,  
Braiding else the scented grass,  
In the pass,  
There the Havasupai race  
Live in grace.

Arizona, o'er thy lands,  
Sunny sands,  
Gleams the light of old romance,  
Magic chance ;  
As thy dead volcano now  
Lifts its brow  
With the ancient fiery streak, —  
Sunset Peak !  
Coranado here of old  
Sought for gold ;  
Spanish saints the deserts trod,  
Called of God,  
Building the adobe church,  
Making search  
For the children of the west,  
Long unblest,  
Ages ere the Dauntless One  
Braved the sun,  
Breasted the wild river's flail,  
Blazed the trail.  
Now the star of empire gleams  
In thy dreams  
Of a destiny unwon,  
And unsung.

## COMMUNION

I know how alien are the hearts of men ;  
How veiled the eyes of spirit ; how we stand  
Aloof and cold, or quiver with distrust.

Aye, even lovers must  
Forego the rapture of the sure command  
Each of the other's inmost life ;  
And oh, we others, lovers not at all,  
Who will not, perchance cannot see  
Beyond the fatal wall  
Of human difference, we  
Are passing cruel to friend and foe, —  
For thus, by some sad law, we strive  
To keep alive  
The flickering flame of individuality.

Yet in the hours of silence, when the strife  
Of bitter tongues and clash of strong desire  
And war of wills is still awhile,  
Into the House of Understanding I retire ;  
And, kneeling at the altar, I require  
Of God to know a little more of love-in-life,  
To know my brother without pride or guile.  
And, sudden, multitudes are nigh ;  
I hear the quivering sigh

Of broken-hearted mourners ; hear  
The wail of impotence, the gasp of fear,  
The blasphemy of sin.  
The shadowy aisles begin  
To swim with faces, wild, convulsed  
With vision of life's naked tragedies,  
Its mortal longings, agonies.  
And these are they erst-seen  
Too-rich, or too-content, too-positive ;  
Or brutish, narrow-brained, unclean.  
O God, forgive my blindness ; me, forgive.

Oh, sorrows infinite !  
The spirit's broken flight,  
When in great loneliness the loving soul  
Gazes with blank and burning eyes  
Upon the Eden of the Not-to-be !  
What agony  
Engulfed in quicksands of a lower destiny !  
Oh, still-born of the spirit and the flesh !  
Oh, birth-pangs ! All the mother's throes,  
Whose body, then whose heart the travail knows,  
Delivering unto the world an individual,  
One alien to herself, perchance hostile !

And once I cried, " What grief like mine ? "  
I now divine  
The universal grief ;  
E'en as I love I shall not pray relief.  
The pain my brother bore, I dare  
To say, I, too, can bear ;  
In fellowship of suffering, I am content  
To take the cup of woe, the bread of sacrament.

Once I was quick in judgment, now  
With eyes washed clear by tears would fain avow  
The various issue, various name  
Of the same high aim ;  
I learn the meaning of the creed I scorn ; —  
I find my brother's hardness born  
Of ignorance like mine ;  
I see his sins the shadows cast  
By his great merit ; understand at last  
How God from out his boundless ken  
Finds less to pardon than we men.

## AT ITS ROOTS.

One sudden day, my Love-Tree bloomed.  
Long had I waited ; now, I stood  
Shadowed by splendor, silent, glad.  
But yonder was my friend's great tree  
Still barren, save the little shoots  
Of wistful green, enwrapping it.  
Oh, my great joy was pitiful !  
In loving kindness did I search  
That strange sweet day, e'er marvelling  
What subsoil-richness, sustenance  
At root, had brought my tree to flower.  
I craved the knowledge for thy sake,  
Thy peace, O Friend.

Through that first day  
My Love-Bloom rained its perfumes down ;  
I saw how on the sky, like wings,  
Its petals spread ; "God doth approve  
My search," I cried.

The Gardener came.  
" Nay, little child," He said, " Why seek ?  
Thou are not Me to find, to know  
The hidden roots of life. Be glad  
Beneath thy blossoms."

Yet I toiled.  
And night came and the sad stars wept  
Their pallid tears of fire ; and souls  
Of Dead Men turned the soil for me,  
Laying their fleshless hands on mine,  
Until I found the richness, found  
The sustenance, life-giving, found  
Thy bloodless heart — O Friend, my Friend.

## PENELOPE

At the web I weave, till I go mad with weaving  
The tangled web whose woof and warp is pain ;  
And Despair, my handmaid, smiles at my de-  
ceiving ;

She knows how vain my labors, — oh, how  
vain !

Despair, Despair, cease from your endless mock-  
ing ;

Let dreams I woven in gleam as they may ;  
What if yet I know that Sorrow's shuttle rocking  
Offwinds the threads of hope at death of day !

Let the dream of my Lord's return

Still warm my heart of woe ;

As ashes within the urn

May kindle and flame and glow.

Let me rest in thine arms once more,

As I rested, dear Lord, of yore ; —

One flash of thine eyes at the last

Shall heal the hurt of the past.

And the subtle thoughts of day and my deceiving  
In hours of night are raveled and undone.

O ye suitors, scorned past word of believing,  
To stoop to you from off my Lord's high  
throne !

To yield the memory of his mighty passion ;

Leave that bright citadel, the stars above !

Oh, stinging shame that such as ye should ever  
fashion

One thought of her who knew Odysseus' love !

And I cry from my lonely home,

Long, long hath the Troy-town burned ;

And from the dark sea's foam

They have greeted the heroes returned.

Not I, alone, alone ;

Sore weary of making moan ;

Whose eyes with no healing of tears  
Are hot with the ache of the years.

O my cousin Helen, sorrow-bringing Helen,  
Aye, bitter was the day when thou wast born ;  
Yea, bitter unto thee ; unto thousands fallen  
In shallow graves of votive off'rings shorn,  
And oh the mocking phantoms that beset me  
When yearningly I gaze o'er sea and shore !  
O Love, my Love, do not, do not forget me  
Though singing Sirens cling to thy lax oar ;  
Though the Queen of the Island west  
Shall sing with the nesting birds,  
Where the cedar-flame leaps like a star  
At the sound of her wooing words ;  
Though the Witch of the crafty art  
Her magic fires shall impart ;  
And the scent of the lotus-flower  
Thy weary heart overpower.

Ah, but still in patient pain I wait forever,  
Yet happy if a dream of me shall pass ;  
If in honied hours of love thou dost remember  
Thy bride of long since, pale now as autumn  
grass.  
My dear Lord, there comes no end to my for-  
giving,  
And my repining has no end save death ;  
Nor while I deem that thou perchance art living  
Would I yield the shades this sorrow-laden  
breath.  
Still, still in the island west,  
I wait while the night falls low ;  
And I gaze o'er the sea's white breast  
And hark as the breezes blow.  
I hear the soft swish of oar,  
And a ship as it grates on shore, —  
In maddening joy, shall I die ?  
Comes he back, O Earth, — O Sky ?

## DEAD LOVE

There was no moaning of the passing-bell  
When thou diedst unto me. No sudden rush  
Of whirlwind from that undiscovered Dark  
Beyond the Dusk blew thitherward thy soul,—  
Poor soul that fluttered like a wounded bird,—  
While I crept sobbing to the dim world's end,  
With eyes that darkness blinded, lips that shook  
With pleading, hands that beat the tenuous air.  
Nay, there was lightsome music all that day;  
Friends gave me careless greeting, knowing not;  
Guests claimed my service, oh, the long, long  
while!

Yet Death in mask of Life pressed close to me;  
His gray and ample shroud that smelt of tears  
Darkened the gracious light, his austere wings  
Winnowed the harvest-meadows of my soul  
And left them bare and barren evermore.

If I had given the dear, dear clay of thee  
To appease the hunger of the insatiate grave,  
The hoarse intoning of the sullen wind,  
The two-edged sword of the frost, the crush  
Of snow, had torn my heart with wounding  
thought

Of their cruel buffeting of thee; and fear  
That thou shouldst sense their rude indignities  
Had driven me in passionate revolt  
Unto the dreary goal of thy pent grave.  
Yea, and the summer sweetness of the sun  
And grass; the dewy breath of spring; the lilt  
Of melodies, once loved, had pierced my breast  
With keener anguish for the bitter fear  
That thou shouldst sense them not. And yet I  
know

The sorrow irremediable shall find  
Healing in its own hopelessness, nor beat

Forever with bruised wings the gateless wall ;  
The throbbing sorrow, chance may still transmute  
To joy, shall find no peace, shall beat to shreds  
Its broken wings upon the gates of life.

It thou hadst died, sometimes the Comforter  
Had breathed his peace into my swollen heart ;  
And all the gracious memories of thee  
Had come to bless me ; — memories whose moan  
Were musical, white-flaming memories  
That now no murk of life can darken, nor  
No hostile wind of alien passion fan  
To fitful flickers that shall race to death  
Upon the ragged cliffs of broken vows.  
But the pale wraith of love long dead shall walk  
With restless footsteps through the marts of life ;  
And barter all her fairest memories  
At bidding of the traitor Doubt ; and deem  
Her coronal of drooping lilies black  
And scentless, then, as now ; and in one grave  
Shall lay the wished-for future and the past,  
Perfect, beyond the measure of desire.

Sometimes, if thou wert dead, I should have  
dreams  
Wherein the marvellous hope that stricken men  
Have cherished in their bosoms from of old  
Should bud and open all its lustrous heart  
In bloom immortal. There, beyond the veil  
That men's exploring senses cannot find,  
Thou wouldst wait me ; love's sovereignty  
In tender memory would clip thy wings  
And stay thy steps ; thou wouldst not outrun me ;  
Thou wouldst delay unsealing of the ear,  
Unscarfing of the eye ; delay, delay  
The eager voyage of discovery,  
Come later to the wide apocalypse.  
But now, we shall grow old, apart,

Nor change to likeness of a face beloved.  
The riot of the blood within thy veins  
Shall bring thee visions that I know not of,  
And turn thy footsteps toward the south ;  
While I shall pace the bleak and cheerless north.  
How can I bid thee wait me ? If, perchance,  
Our paths should cross again, we two should meet  
As strangers meet, with formal courtesy  
And curious speculation ; know alone  
That the wild throb of clinging lips  
Were still ; the loving spell of answering hands  
Were broken. Never shall the blighted bud  
Shake with the thrill of bloom, nor bear the  
weight  
Of living seeds ; but it shall droop and hear  
The immemorial moan of all the years.

### THE BIRTH

Dear, should the Heaven yearn,  
And all her starry passions merge in one ;  
Her loves and longings of the stars and suns  
    Grow one vast yearning,  
Gold-shot as is a sea of amber touched by lights  
    Of nightly fires and fervors ;  
Should Heaven yearn thus, 'twould bring forth a  
    soul, —  
Thine, passioned Drop of Being, thine,  
Bright Thing of star and shine, of sun and fire.

Dear, should a Prayer take life ;  
Should all her perfect pleading give her wings ;  
And those wings raise her to the holy heights,  
    The realms ecstatic,  
Beneath which floats in crystal clarity  
    The universe God breathed through ;

Her white virginity might too conceive ;—  
Thee, child of Sanctity's sweet womb ;  
Thee, Woman-soul of God's own purity.

Dear, should the tired Earth smile ;  
The weary, ancient, wrinkled mother smile ;  
And that one Smile sink deep in anxious hearts  
    Of poor earth children  
To solace them, to comfort them, to soothe,  
    To linger like a blessing ;  
Methinks that should that gladdening Smile give  
    birth, —  
O Thou, my one earth-comfort, Thou, —  
Mine own Heart-balm that heal'st for me life's  
    hurt.

#### HELEN OF TROY

Helen, thou passionate Queen, thy pulse is throbbing, now, now ;  
I can feel the soft flush of thy hand, can see the  
    white light of thy brow ;  
Whirling, thy tresses sweep in mine eyes the  
    flashes of suns ;  
And thine arms enfold me till deeps of a soul-  
    swerving longing comes !  
Oh, to lie still in the song of thy wonderful  
    being's sweep ;  
To dream in the azured light of a love-filled,  
    love-sweet sleep ;  
To fold to my desolate heart thee of the world's  
    desire ;  
And to passion my soul to thy soul as star is  
    passioned to star.

## A LAY FOR MY LADY

“ Sweet, my Lady, have mercy, I love thee ;  
See how I bend here before thee ;  
Adore thee.

Thou child of the Snow-Queen, with silent frost  
heart,  
I would that the beams of love’s noon-sun might  
dart  
Into the crystalline deeps of that whiteness ;  
Leave thee undone ;  
As I sigh at thy feet, O thou cruel, O thou fair  
One !  
Have mercy, my Lady.”

She answereth not ; but draweth aside  
Her faint-rustling robe with a gesture of pride ;  
And her eyes with their opaline shadows and  
dreams,  
And her hair with its rich dusky glintings and  
gleams,  
Shone on him afar, as on leaf shineth star ;  
And she smileth disdain,  
Nor heedeth the pain :  
“ Have mercy, my Lady.”

She speaketh : “ My Lord, I pray thee to tell me  
What may be this love that so strangely assails  
thee,  
And can lead thee wherefore to kneel at my feet,  
To adore, to entreat ? ”  
It bewild’reth my Lady.

“ My Lady, to tell thee  
Were the secret of all thy sweet self to reveal  
thee.  
Love ! ’tis the glint in thine eyes and thy hair ;  
'Tis the lilt of thy step in the grasses, grown 'ware  
Of all the soft pulses of heart and of vein ;

And love is the sense of thy worshipful name,  
'Tis the curve of thy wrist, the sweep of thy  
gown,  
And the throb of thy voice as it falleth adown  
    To that last note,—  
    Oh, the thrill of thy throat!  
        Have mercy, my Lady."

Hear her scorn, as she saith :  
    “ My Lord, 'tis strange lore,  
        And more,—  
Perchance thou canst tell me yet more! ”  
    Oh, bewildered my Lady.

“ 'Tis the sense of the star and the secret of weed ;  
'Tis the rhythm of breeze through the wheatland  
    and mead ;  
'Tis the soul of all music; glint of all dreams ;—  
    Words are vain ; Love, I ween,  
    Is the life o' thee, Queen.  
        Have mercy, my Lady.”

But in silence she sitteth and watcheth the sun-  
    lance  
Pierce through the leaves of the arbor ;  
    Nor throweth a glance  
        At her lover beside her.  
Then cometh the noon tide and heat cometh on ;  
She calleth her nurse, the old wrinkled crone,  
    Who hath wisdom with wrinkles.  
        “ God bless thee, my Lady.”

She hobbleth away with many a groan ;  
Then looketh aback at the knight and her lady.  
“ Ah, well-a-day, my sweet child ! ” she saith.  
    She pauseth for breath,  
        “ It were well  
            If the spell

Of Love's brewing shall teach her  
What he cannot preach her,—  
For God bless thee, Lady."

Anon, she comes back with two crystalline goblets;

And the crown of the one is foamy with snows,  
And o'erbeaded with bubbles of ruby and gold,  
That the sunlights slip through, like a bee through  
a rose;

Limpid and cool as brook-water glows  
The white gleam of the other:  
"The red for my Lady;  
The white, sir, for thee.  
God bless ye, my children."

Why, see how my lady is pondering the glints  
That play through the vintage, as though she  
were fain

To gather her hints  
Of strange coming futures and fervors!  
It bewildereth my Lady.

While lifting his cup athwart the bright sky,  
With his eyes on his mistress he frameth a sigh,  
"Have mercy, my Lady."

And the old wrinkled crone muttereth on,  
Muttereth on,  
"Now drink ye, my children;  
God bless ye, my children."

He raiseth the cup to his lip,  
And pledges his love in a lingering sip;  
Then he drinketh the liquor, aye, draineth the  
cup,  
And laying the goblet aside, riseth up.  
"Have mercy, my Lady."

Lo! See my Lady!

Slowly, as one in the swoon of a dream,  
She tastes of the vintage; her white fingers seem  
To circle the crystal like wind-flowers;

Her eyes

Are alight to the deeps with the fires of the skies.

She drinketh,  
She drinketh.

“God bless thee, my Lady.”

He hummeth the song of an army on march,  
And paceth the sward with a soldierly tread.

See my Lady!

She hath risen her seat, she hath lifted her head.  
“My Lord! Peace to thee, Beloved,” she said.

Oh, bewildered my Lady!

And a tremble o’ red ’gan stir in her cheek;  
And the breath o’ her breath was atremble and  
weak

With manifold flutterings and wingings;  
The frost heart is loosened, hath broke forth in  
singings;

She calleth him, calleth as soft as the dove,  
“My Love,” she hath said it, “My Lord and my  
Love!”

Yea, bewildered my Lady.

He starts from camp reveries,  
Draweth near proudly;  
He maketh obeisance,  
“Have mercy, my Lady,”  
He speaketh right coldly.

“The fever for lance and for battle is on me;  
Dismiss me; oh, believe me.”

She faltereth lowly, “I love thee. Wouldst leave  
me?”

“Have mercy, my Lady!”

Oh, he laugheth in scorn: "What is love, O my  
Lady?"

She droopeth brown lights of her eyes to his feet,  
Sinking to green sward.

She raiseth eyes heavenward;

"My Lord, it is this!

"Tis service, I wis;

'Tis exquisite yearning;

The heart at its shrine;

'Tis this kneeling of mine."

All bewildered my Lady.

But he turneth away, "What is love? Canst  
reply?"

And her sweet faltering words she hath hushed;  
On the green of the grasses her bright tresses lie,  
While her lips seek the place that his footsteps  
have brushed.

"O my Love, thou didst love me;

What is it," she moans,

That hath changed thee on sudden?"

"Oh, love," saith the knight,

"It goes with the hour,

And we pass with the sun-slant from under its  
power.

Thou art fair, O my Lady, but fairer, more dear,  
Is the neigh of the steed on the battlefield,

Clash of the spear.

Farewell to thee, Lady."

She moaneth, she moaneth,

"Woe's me! Let me go

To the battlefield with thee,

And shield thee,

And lo!

Thou shalt rest on my heart when the battles are  
over.

O Beloved, to serve thee,—

Have mercy upon me!"

“ Peace, dear, my Lady, I go.”  
It bewildereth my Lady.

Oh, she swooneth to trees and to sun and to  
grasses ;  
And her white face upturned shineth as snow-  
flowers in passes  
Of high mountain glens ; and her poor lips are  
pale  
And stir not with breath nor tremble with wail.

But nigh cometh the crone,  
And she muttereth on,  
“ Now God bless thee, Lady.”

She kneeleth beside her and crooneth her wis-  
dom :

“ It was so since the first,  
'Tis the way of this earth.  
For him, I wis, it is love and forgetting ;  
For her, I wis, it is love and regretting.

The thrall for dominion shall hold him forever ;  
Love's pulse in her bosom shall cease — never,  
never.

Power for the man and sorrow for woman.

He hath taught her to love ;  
Ah, when shall she learn  
The lesson he learneth so quickly, to turn ? ”

She bends o'er her lady,  
With hand on her breast ;

“ God bless thee, my Lady,”  
She saith ;

“ Give thee rest !

Now thy breath

Cometh more quickly. .

Aye, and she moaneth ;

It is well yet,” she crooneth.

“ God bless thee, my Lady,  
Thy lot is the best.”

## MY PRAYER

I pray for the eye that shall pierce  
The veil of the passing show;  
For the hand that is strong to build;  
The mind that dares to know.

I would fain sing the song that shall heal  
Man's ancient sorrow and sin;  
I would sound the deeps of despair  
And sovereign Deliverance win.

Yet if,—oh, the seeming world  
Is exceeding dear and fair;  
And perchance to be quiet and smile  
Is as strong as to do and dare.

I pray for unsullied strength  
To fight the battles of Right;  
To lead in fearless assault  
On the ramparted legions of Night.

And yet, if instead I may fight  
The wrong in one heart alone,  
'Tis a harder battle, perchance,  
Than ever waged round a throne;

For no sound of martial music  
Spurs on the heavy feet;  
And the battlefield lies in silence,  
Comes victory or defeat.

I pray for the Heavenly Love;  
For the light of her shining glance;—  
Love of the mighty wings,  
Hymned in sacred romance.

Yet Love in the sober gray,  
Who is patient and will not yield,  
Whose hands are tender to soothe,  
Though her eyes to the vision are sealed,

Is the Love that for ages hath done  
The weary work of the world,  
Who clings, perchance, closer to earth,  
Since the wings of her fancy are furled.

Perchance, — O multiform Life,  
Teach me the perfect Will,  
That my heart may be patient and wait,  
When my eager feet must be still.

### BUBBLES

See how the little one stands in delight,  
Blowing the bubbles, then tossing in flight ;  
See how they float in azure space,  
And upward dart in mocking race !  
Beautiful, shimmering, vanishing things,  
Water of gold with rainbow wings !

Laugh, little boy, run here, run there,  
Catch, if thou canst, the ball of air ;  
Touch but the gold and all is o'er ; —  
Blow, little boy, yet more, yet more.  
Dance of a sunray, purple and green ;  
Dance a moonbeam of silver sheen !

Ah, little boy, some of wrinkled brow  
Blow, blow bubbles, even as thou ; —  
Beautiful bubbles, fragile and gold,  
Breaking like tears on a cheek grown cold ;  
Not to be clasped, they float away  
Into the dawn of a fairer day.

## WAILING AND WEARINESS

Wailing and weariness,  
Vain !

Not wail, not silence holds it,—  
Birth-throes, death-agonies,  
Passions of untamed spirits,  
Sweet sanities,  
Vast mad insanities.

Hear how the Mocker laughs !

“ My Fool, thou canst not catch it ;  
Thou callst it Self — poor Egoist —  
And Love, — thou simple Satirist —  
And God, and Genius, Devil.

Lo ! behind the vail  
Thou canst not see,  
Nor know what baffles thee ;  
Thou canst not wholly feel,  
Thou canst not flee  
The mad bewilderment,  
The spirit-rending wonder,  
The sense of baffling agonizing Mystery.  
Thou wild bird caught in web of silk too fine !  
Thou bruisèd misty-wingèd Thing  
Dashing thy life out 'gainst the bounds too  
crystal-clear !

Thou Soul, lost in thine own waste-void.”

## TANGLE

See, Dear, what tangle of leaves,  
What tangle of sunlight and leaves,  
Where the loitering winds are blowing,  
And the rippling sun-tides flowing ;  
See, Dear, what tangle of leaves !  
O Love, what tangle of soul,  
What tangle of spirit and soul,  
Where the leaf-buds of promise are blowing,  
And the tides of our passion flowing ;  
O Love, what tangle of soul !

## TO A WHITE BUTTERFLY

Gauze of tenuous mist ;  
White-winged, white-souled Thing ;  
Thou wonderful flutter and flight ;  
Thou ravishing, vanishing sight ;  
Thou flower of the living wing !

Grace-note flown from song,  
Song of the summer wind ;  
I am holden in grieved amaze  
As I follow thy circling ways,  
For, lo ! I am left behind.

## FOREBODING

Unto the mournful Night I fled,  
While the World was sleeping;  
Around me pressed the troubled Dead,  
Aweeping, weeping.

And aged Fear walked by my side,  
And wrinkled Sorrow,  
Who shook their hoary locks and cried,  
"Alas! Tomorrow!"

Hope stumbled o'er the thorny lea  
In weary token  
That even she her hour must dree,  
Her wing was broken.

I sank beneath the blighted tree  
Whose fruit is madness;  
The drooping branches, long and dank,  
Dripped dews of sadness.

The little leaves hanging pale and meek  
Began to quiver;  
Their chilly fingers brushed my cheek  
With many a shiver.

And oh, a grave in the Dark, somewhere,  
Was hidden, hidden;  
I cried, "Who as guest to that cold lair  
Hast thou, Death, bidden?"

But no sound came to me over the waste  
Save of wild winds blowing;  
The bitter fruit I pluckéd in haste,—  
The mad are knowing.

## WHOM THE POTTER FORGOT

In the turn of the Wheel, I am one  
Whom the Potter forgot.

Poor Pitcher, misshapen, thrown by,  
Without handle or spout!

I have held not the wine of the King,  
Nor the dews of rebirth;  
Nor gladdened the lips — would I might! —  
Of the toilers of earth.

Yet open I lie to the sky,  
Whence the sweet rains run  
And mix with the odorous breaths  
Of the wind and the sun.

Forgot by the trafficking world,  
I may hold in despite  
The brewings, potent and wild,  
Of the storm and the night.

And oh, the creatures small  
That beg me for dole;  
And the frayed and travel-stained wings  
That are dipped in my bowl!

And perchance when the gracious rains  
More plenteous fall,  
I, too, overflowing, may bless,  
As I fain would bless, all.

Or at last some sun-smitten day  
May break me in two,  
And the spilt dew at my heart may refresh  
Yes, You, Potter, You!

## THE FLIGHT OF THE ALONE TO THE ALONE

*Φυγή μόνου πρὸς μόνον.*

All loving, yet all unloved, back I come  
To Thee, Great Love, unloved;  
With fireless, prayerless worship, deaf and dumb,  
Thou Great Alone! I come.

Back to all circling motion's centered Calm;  
Back to the barren Waste;  
Without or plaintive hymn or chanted psalm,  
I come, I come, Sad Calm.

Back without sound of sob, slow sob or moan;  
In pity, lonely God!  
The flight of one alone to Thee Alone,—  
Why sob or throb or moan?

## MOON-DAWN

Dim hour enchanted! Through Dusk's silver  
bloom  
The white-barked weeping birches trail  
Their gleaming branches in the undergloom.

And palpitating fireflies whirl and drift  
Like flakes of flame upon a lazy wind,  
And white fore-glimmers through the tree-tops  
sift.

I lie within the scented grasses, seek  
Some sweet release from my sweet reverie,—  
And then, a vagrant star falls on my cheek.

Alas, no star! The firefly blows away.  
Oh, see! The lovely tracery of the long birch  
bough  
Against the glinting of the moon's new day.

## HARVEST DAYS

The sunlights slant through the kerneled grains,  
And the silent shadows sift atween,—  
And oh for the golden prophecies  
In the young sweet days when the fields were  
green!

'Tis the harvest at last, though the heaps be  
scant,  
For the wind and weather and thwarted toil;  
Nay, not all at fault is the growing thing  
That upward strives through the thirsty soil;  
For the work of the year makes long demands  
On the delicate strength of the children of  
earth,  
And the courage that pierces dust and sun  
Hath earned its rest ere another birth.

Yea, sweetest of all are the harvest days,  
Though Spring be sweet when the sap runs  
new,  
And joy stirs long in the troubled seed  
And shines in the upturned drop of dew.

Come silent splendors and rich content;  
It is well, it is well, for the work is done;  
And I dream o'er the time when I, too, shall be  
In my harvest days with the long rest won.

## LEAFING

I am lost in the silver silence  
That comes ere Spring's hour of birth,  
When the pallid vault of the heavens  
Arches low o'er the breathless earth.

'Tis the silver silence that harbors  
The wandering moan of a dove;  
The sibylline silence that shelters  
The sobbings of desolate love.

'Tis the silence that breaks as a bubble  
'Neath the wanton whir of a wing;  
That breaks into musical laughter  
At the faltering foot-fall of Spring.

Ah, hush! Is the silence broken?  
What faint sweet notes arise!  
Hear the sound of leaf-buds expanding  
With tender and tremulous sighs.

What dainty fingers to wreck it,  
My silver-blue dome of air!  
What fragile music to shatter  
My crystalline temple of prayer!

Leaflets tender and shining  
With the starry dews of birth,  
Half-furled in clinging reluctance,  
Ashiver with timid mirth!

How the tree-mother holds them unto her,  
And croons them a simple song;  
Or smile as her fluttering nestlings  
Stretch skyward their wings, grown strong.

Behold! I am stirred by the leafing  
    Into tremulous silence,— ah, me!  
My Soul dares venture a leaf-bud  
    Out into Mystery.

My leaf is reluctant and sober;  
    Like the tiniest bud it has fear  
Of the wan frosts, the false winds that linger  
    In the wake of the year.

Great Tree-mother, Thou, too, be gracious!  
    Let thy plenteous sap outgush.  
Bless my leafing, renew it, fulfill it  
    In this hour of the springtide hush.

### I WALKED WITH DEATH

I walked with Death an hour, along the surge  
    Of saltish waters, dragging heavy feet  
And straining sullen ears to the dull dirge  
    Of booming breakers, ere I gasped to beat  
The aching dumbness into words, to reach  
    The sympathy of speech.

“ Love, Love, how like an orphaned child to thee  
    I crept, forth the long terrors of the night.  
Thy strength should haven and thy joy make  
    free!  
O Love! O Lost! how hath the promised light  
Plunged deep into the midmost dark of all,  
    Gone, gone beyond recall!”

Death touched my eyelids with his withered hand.  
    “Aye, so I know it, Sovereign Death,” I cried;  
“ Mine own my sin and anguish, or I stand  
    Reluctant, or with flaming feet the wide  
Dark way of individual growth explore,  
    I must alone, none more.”

“ Yet oh, the Mystics ! ” I made murmur. “ They  
Who grope straight sunward with the slow,  
sad hands,  
And wise eyes glory-filmed ; who trail the way  
With drooping censers, sweet with shifting  
sands  
Of incense, wreathed with lotus-flower ; oh, long  
They chant the quiet song.

“ ‘All yea,’ they sing of that white Lily-bloom,—  
The silver radiancy, whose lustrous heart  
The shining holds of perfect primal doom ;  
Not angelry, not demony apart ;  
Not Self, not God, not fleshly Flesh, not Soul ;  
One Lily, one white Whole.”

Death looked athwart the waters with wide eyes.  
I moaned, “ Oh, pardon, victims of the sea !  
Nay, calm’s no recompense for wreckage. Flies  
The hurt bird better for the one that’s free ?  
Strong prayer is fruit of action and faith sears,  
Save kindling faith’s new fears.”

“ Of these tears, what ? ” Death asked. “ I’d  
bare, O Death,  
This quivering flesh to all thine arrowy pains ;  
Not for myself I fear, thine icy breath  
From love’s deep pity draws the heavy rains.”  
Death said, “ Take counsel of thine own proud  
strength.”  
I counsel took, — at length.

O coward, craven heart ! O brutish pride !  
I like a god stand firm and drain release  
From out the cup of anguish ; meanwhile guide  
That cup from others, greeting them with  
“ Peace ! ”  
Pain’s minister were better, swift to smite,  
As smites Truth’s withering light.

Death smiled. "Twin-sister of eternal change,  
O Truth, flash gently on these dazzled eyes;  
O Many-pinioned, give the wanderer range,  
Give wings that lift unto receding skies,  
Unto new suns and splendors, suns star-fed,—  
Stars, of that feeding, dead."

"No life," said Death, "holds life in compass;  
knows

All Love, all Faith, the Act's creative thrill,  
Joy's pangs, Despair's surrender; yet there flows  
Through each the passion of the living Will;  
Each life is Life, the pulse within the vein,  
The Altar in the fane."

Then Life, mine ancient enemy, seemed dear;  
I wavered towards her with expectant eyes;  
I cried, "I yield my pity, yield my fear;  
O Life, the Multiform, I would be wise!"  
Then Death pressed on my brow an icy kiss.  
"To thee Life giveth this."

## HIGH-WATER MARK

Ah God, there, there, athwart the granite ledge  
Of Memory, lies the accusing hand,  
Mine own high-water mark! Below, the strand  
Lies fouled by stagnant waters, slimy sedge.

There rolled one time the lordly inland sea,  
With inspirations of a thousand springs,  
And gracious winnowings of snowy wings  
That sought in friendliness the expanse free.

(O heart, be still! Upon the skirting height  
What golden glooms, where shadows shot with  
sun  
Through silences of fragrant forests run,  
And quiver with the thrilling breath of light!)

O circling hills, my waters swept of yore  
With loving waves of life! Those waves for-  
lorn  
Fall now as mildew-blight on tasseled corn.  
Dear hills, I loved then, but now love the more.

I dare not raise nor drop mine eyes. Above  
There lies the fatal ripple-mark; below  
The dreary desolation. Yea, I know  
The death I bring unto the hills I love.

## OLD EARTH

To sink back into life, life multitudinous,—  
It is so sweet, a sinking back of birth;  
The pillowing heart and head, so world-forespent,  
Upon the soft green pillow of old earth,  
    Soft pillow redolent  
Of all reposeful summers and all cooling snows.  
To be quite still, save for the healing touch  
Of growing grass and sense of flowing sap  
And healthy, happy movements of slow things.  
To think not, yet be conscious of so much;  
To feel the bird's song, throat and wings,  
That careless song wherewith God pays  
With usury unto his creatures his great debt,—  
Creative joy of six momentous days,—  
To feel it, and to feel the bird's forgetfulness  
    Of what it means;  
And how he sings because it seems  
    He needs must sing;  
No reasoning of duty, nor no cares of song.  
To grow myself as careless as a bird,  
Intent upon my round of duties with no word  
    Of feverish haste lest I be long,  
    Or breaking fear lest I should fail.  
There are so many of us, and God knows  
That one is only one. One means so little;  
And aye, perchance, much too. What can avail  
To question that? To grow quite still seems  
better,  
    And wise and very godly;  
Quite still and happy, laying by the myriad half-  
doubts,  
And e'en the sins once sinned so proudly  
    In weak and wayward ignorance,—  
    Not half so heavy, if I knew.  
Not now to cry for wings to scale the blue;

Nor mad for freedom's whetted lance ;  
Sleeping the hours away, or waking, dreaming,  
Prone on the healthy turf, so warmly seeming  
Sheeted by balmy blue and fleecy white, —  
Thrown by a skyey hand o'er couch of green, —  
Ministered to by ever new delight ;  
By wondrous dear bed-fellows, as they lean  
Toward hand or cheek with shy caress, —  
So richly does our Mother Earth still bless  
With tiny brothers of the dust and air,  
And, most of all, the live ant in his thoughtless  
care,  
Creeping upon me with the sense of small blessed  
restful labors,  
Such labors as may be (and not too hard,  
If God will) for a child that's tired.

### BAFFLED

Elusive, oh, elusive seemeth all ;  
I cannot measure aught nor find the core ;  
The strange sweet depth eludes me evermore ;  
And, baffled, at the goal I fall.

The mist-bloom on the peach, the smell of rain,  
The fingers of the wet wind on my brow ; —  
They stir my troubled senses, they avow  
I know not what unfathomed pain.

And all immortal melodies I hear  
Seem but a passing prelude, faint and fine,  
To that orchestral harmony divine  
That haunts my fretted ear.

Mine eyes are baffled by each passing shade ;  
By rifted dome of cloud of pearly sheen ; —  
Ah, portal to what palaces unseen  
Is that ensilvered palisade ?

The dark pine forest has a thousand aisles,  
And here the wild Wood-Spirit takes her rest ;  
And if I seek her, vain my prolonged quest ;  
She vanisheth with beckoning wiles.

I've thrown myself on Mother Nature's breast,  
To hear her heart beat and to breathe her breath ;  
Her calm sweet smile is on me as she saith,  
"The throbbing is thine own unrest."

And sometimes, too, as in a clear dark pool  
I long to gaze upon mine own strange soul ;  
It is in vain, the troubled waters roll,  
Comes not the outline, sharp and cool.

Why, Dear, I ofttimes search thine eyes, e'en  
thine,  
I am not sure that I have found just Thee ;  
Thy image floats before and mocketh me,  
I never feel Thee wholly mine.

And God, in his mysterious Being, still,  
A dim mirage, is seen and lost again ;  
I seek to pass the antechamber ; vain ;  
My steps are spelled upon the sill.

## MONISM

Oh, how at one is my heart  
With the infinite oneness of things !  
How it sings in the song of each bird,  
Flies on its wings !

Prone on the outwarder flash  
Of the great All-Will it lies ;  
And watches its play in a soul ;  
Shining the skies.

Oh, it is joy to say  
To the clod of earth, " Thou art I " ;  
And to mirror myself in each tree,  
Wonderful I !

Rest, it is rest to pray,  
" Dear God, it is so, I am thou ;  
True, true, thou once wert on earth,  
Thou who art now."

Deeply thou canst not hide,  
Behold, I see thee in whole ;  
In this marvellous hand I see,  
See in this soul.

Outward and inward alike ;  
And sweet hate and love, the same ;  
It matters not, heaven or hell,  
I read thy name.

Strange indivisible Whole,  
Thou Whole of the myriad parts,  
Thou thrillest thyself and me,  
Pulse of two hearts !

## THE SOUL-BEYOND

Past rhythmic motion, sweet flesh, scent ;  
Past Beauty's wide realm, sound and sight ;  
Past fever of this sense-world, went  
    The Soul-Beyond.

The Soul-Beyond ! scarce realized, wholly known ;  
Sought in the dusk of sight, the dumb of tongue ;  
When love is passion-still, when dreams are  
flown ;—  
    The Soul-Beyond.

Sweet in the unthought Thought to lie ;  
Peace for the Soulless, Souls among ;  
Joy of the deathless Death to die ;  
    Thou ! Soul-Beyond !

Lost in the trackless wilderness of Space ;  
Lost in the lengthening ages, ageless grown ;  
The child-eyed Mystery, friendly, face to face ;—  
    The Soul-Beyond.

## A QUESTION

In that gray time,  
In that long weariness and bitter pain ;—  
    Yes, fold me, Love, within thine arms, sustain  
And comfort me, lest I forget and deem,  
As once I deemed it all, a dream,  
A dream too fair  
For earthly verity ;  
And so return that time of desolation, of despair ;  
When doubt lay coiled, a serpent, 'twixt us ;  
And sin's dim augury  
Lay heavy on our hearts, foreboding night,  
And the world's shadow darkened on our sight.

Oh, those old days !  
When agony is my familiar friend ;  
And the long tireless pulses in me send  
The heated blood through valve and vein,  
Dissolving in me heart and limb and brain ; —  
And I forget my childhood ; nevermore  
To stand upon Joy's tideless shore  
And echo all her rippling song ;  
Ah, nevermore with raptures long  
To gladden on the breast of day  
And ruffle with soft fingers each bright plume,  
Laughing to see how golden wings illume  
The purple splendor of her way.  
Yea, and it died forever,  
Careless gayety of simple youth and glee ;  
In lamentation and in moan  
The days slipped on.

Then flood-time came ;  
And from the sobbing shoals of personal wrong  
I crept with hesitating feet along  
Into the deep salt ocean of all pain ;  
And its waves broke upon me, breast and head ;  
It deluged me ; its mighty flood  
Of waters blinded me, and thinned my blood  
To one long stream of saltish bitterness ;  
And like one dead  
It tossed me to the barren cheerless shore  
Of helpless speculation.  
Faiths broken, when faith's need the greatest.  
Why ?  
Oh, the long question ! Why the mumbled creed ;  
The prayer that issues in a senseless cry ;  
Love in its shroud and Love's own breaking need  
Of Love so shrouded ;  
The long, long wail of thwarted passion ; aspirations clouded ?

Why  
The dreadful mockery of what seems high ;  
The shameless nakedness of sin ; the misery  
Of want, the ravenous ; the rending fangs  
Of pitiless insanity ?

And no redress,  
Save the low lids of cruel indifference,  
Or death in all full bitterness.  
Oh, but I called the Maker to the bar,  
Who planned the whole, — Him I arraigned ;  
Adjured Him by his sovereign power,  
By that dear name of God, so named  
Of loving faith, to answer ; lay the fear  
Of demony in mastery.

Ah me !  
Why should the golden fruit hold evermore  
The worm at its dead core ?  
Why should the blast that withers come before  
The hand that garners ? Why the gate of death

Swing joyward ?  
Me, helpless drift,  
Thoughts tossed to doubts, and doubts uplift  
To fling on madness !  
And the long woes of times now run ;  
And the long woes of time to come  
Found focus in thine own sad eyes that yearn to  
bless,

And yearn in vain.  
“ If I were God ! ” Nay, it may be that I  
Have made in all misknowledge this sad Hell ;  
I and you others, and we pay in pain  
The price of our misdoing. It is well.

Sin, shadow, serpent,  
Gone!

Love, Love, and we two one!

And though the old sweet gayety shall not return,  
A sweeter somewhat in its stead has come;  
Something so full of mystery,  
That laughter holds it not; more sad  
Than tears; than happiness more glad;  
And Knowledge's wide, slow gates  
Are opening toward me;  
Mine eye with vision burns and waits  
To see perfected beauty;  
And I am nerved to meet life's passion,  
For living justifies life's fashion.

O patient Heart above me!

Is my discovery,  
Is the quick light that flashes me,  
All individual?

Is prescient love for love alone grown wise?

Is love's significance that gives all cries

Their perfect meaning,  
Significant for only lovers?

What of those others?  
Hadst thou not come to me,

Should I still be

In hopeless question by the rise and fall  
Of billowy agony?

Contains my deep content, content for all?

L. of C.

## THE PIONEERS

### I

#### THE PLAINT

It is so far, O God, it is so far;  
And we have wandered many a weary year;  
Thy wastes stretch onward, ever on; austere  
Before us lie thy bleaknesses; thy bar  
Gigantic of Alaskan frost; thy scar  
Of whitened sunsick sands;—O God, we fear  
Thy savageries, thy desolations drear;  
Yea, dumb, while of gaunt deaths oracular.

We have grown old in battling, O thou God!  
Behold these grizzled hairs, these furrowed  
pangs,  
These twisted, roughened hands; these feet long  
shod!  
For us thy reclaimed prairies bear not, clangs  
Of building cities ring not; nor the glow  
Of warm sweet fellow-living do we know.

## II

### THE PAEAN

It is enough, O God, enough to seek,  
Not find. The harvest-joy of worlds redeemed  
Was ours in that great time of light, when  
seemed  
The living thought to leap from peak to peak,  
Onward from silence into song; not weak,  
Not wavering song, but floods of sound else  
dreamed  
Of mountain music, song that rolled and  
streamed  
Relentless, thundering down the thin harsh shriek  
Of pain. We gird our loins, we are grown wise;  
We cry, not rest, but vision ere the night.  
Let thy prophetic glory smite our eyes  
With eagerness; our nameless hands with  
might.  
O Vast! O Undiscovered! O Unwon!  
Toward Thee our pioneer feet press on and on.

## THE CHANT OF THE COAL HEAVERS

What we chant from the womb of the Deep, O  
ye men, will ye hear?  
To the harsh noise and toil of the Dark, O ye  
White-faced, lend ear?  
With your plummet dropped sheer, to the grimy  
deeps hurled,  
Would ye sound, as your God might, the heavy  
work of the world?

Yea, let the banner speed high, let it flaunt the  
sun's mirth,  
Let the man-cry exultant go beating the rim of  
the earth;  
Hist! how the wild cannon missiles triumphantly  
sing!  
See the free, the glad death-dance, the maddening  
swing  
To the jubilant chaotic First, to the rapturous  
verve  
Of Beginning. Wist! Never a thought of the  
straining nerve  
In the dark; of the sullen, the slow, the heavy  
breath  
That is silently throttled in grip of a passionless  
death;  
Without thrill at the bullet's turbulent kiss, nor  
cry  
Of the martial soul in its lordly frenzy to die.  
Is it day? Is it night? Is the battle lost? Is it  
won?  
Give us answer. Whose fires have speeded the  
war-ship on?  
Whose muscles have strained, have tugged 'gainst  
the force of the deep?  
Whose eyes have foregone the victorious light-  
nings of sleep?

All's well. To serve Heroes we're patient and  
give our day;  
A brute in yoke for a man, 'twere better, we say,  
Than a brute made god to be offered fool-worship  
and praise.  
Our birth-right were better, the smouldering  
labor of days,  
And the grim sacrificial off'ring of Godhead  
and light,  
Than the bloodless ease of a Thing, or the blind-  
ness of sight.  
Stalwart warriors of God! Ye fight 'neath the  
sun. In the dark  
We are stifling, all sluggish; yet blindly we grope  
toward a spark  
Of the infinite purpose in battle, and dully we  
flame  
At the thundering call of the militant trumpet.  
We claim  
Of the manhood, the freedom, that shall be, our  
portion. Up, then,  
And complete as for Man the fiery salvation of  
men.

## A PRAIRIE TRAIL

The prairie's billowy rolling led me. 'Ware  
Of its wild trail I wandered on my way,  
The happy vagrant of a sunny day.  
Lost in the open freedom I could dare  
Sing freely, proudly; it was mine to share  
Its inspirations; I could laugh aloud  
Because 'tis bowed,  
My song, to earthward. "Even so," I sing,  
"Is bowed to earthward the wide curving sky."  
And so my song grew still for marvelling.

The western sky! It hushed my song. Up-  
flashed  
Its blue, a radiancy so full of shine  
That over me where wind-fires intertwine  
It gleamed behind the billowy clouds updashed;  
The very air a brilliancy that splashed  
In sudden silver dashes on the earth,  
With rippling mirth  
Of humming insects, restless-winged and slow.  
Oh, sense and scent of flowing warmth and sun!  
Oh, long, sweet-hearted, healthy, happy glow!

The shaggy earth, it drew me as a child.  
Its brown and laughing strength brought me  
the flush  
Of sunburnt courage, while the thick sage-  
brush  
Breathed me a tonic fragrance, warm and wild.  
I wandered on. I caught the music mild  
Of crisping grass; and saw the thistles thrive,  
Their balls alive  
With small bright tenants. Oh, I smiled to see  
That sound of rustling skirt can startle so  
Some cocked-head gopher or some robber bee.

Afar, the red foot-hills. How clear, how clean  
Their cameo-line that cuts the farther height  
Of distant purple when the westering light  
Casts her long spears of paling mauve and green ;  
But in the morning lights those red hills lean  
Unto the quivering brightness mistily.

And I could see  
Upon the undulations of the high sky-line,  
And where the shadows swing in dipping glens,  
The darkening plumage of the fringing pine.

Oh, beautiful it was, and wild and free ;  
Forever onward led the endless trail,  
Forever swerving. So, too, shall avail  
The spirit's glad impetuosity.  
The prickly cactus found a word for me,  
Preaching the independence of all strength.

I knew at length,  
Pondering o'er daisies in the thirsty soil,  
The wise forgetting, knew the deep content,  
And the long quiet blessings of brown toil.

## I HEARD THE SPIRIT SINGING

I heard the Spirit singing in the ancient cave of Work:

“ You are playing, Man-child, playing where the evil demons lurk;

Yet I would not have you falter nor count the awful cost,

Lest your heart grow old within you and the zest for sport be lost.

“ So toss the ball of empire with its fatal coat of fire;

And dig for gilded nuggets with the pangs of hot desire;

And blow your filmy bubbles in the bright face of the sun,

Though you know they'll tarnish, vanish ere playing-time is done.

“ Go, spin the humming-top of Thought; or brood with sullen lip,

As you scrawl upon the canvas or load the merchant ship;

Come, tell some old, old story, or rehearse some ancient creed;

Or with many a lisp of wonder draw the music from the reed.

“ Let your playful hand in cunning devise a giant eye,

And in long hours of frolic guess the secrets of the sky;

Or peer with curious longing in the busy under-bourne,

Where microscopic beings are sporting in their turn.

“And raise Love’s swaying ladder to the dizzy  
heights of woe,  
And walk o’er desert places where the thorns  
and thistles grow,  
Where the Man-child gropes and stumbles and  
holds his quivering breath,  
As he meets within the shadows his last play-  
fellow, Death.”

And I heard the Spirit singing, “Laughter is the  
strongest prayer,  
And the zest of faith is measured by the mirth  
that toys with care;  
And he who plays the hardest, and dares to laugh  
aloud,  
Beyond the cavern’s shadows may some day  
work with God.”





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